Lanka has been amended to provide for the creation of Provincial Councils, the Sri Lankan Government has completed legislative processes for devolution of powers to these Provincial Councils. With this, the basic framework been created for the settlement of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It is now up to the Sri Lanka Government and Tamil groups to give meaning to this framework and create conditions for effective devolution.

Delay in issuing of passports

*416. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the huge backlog of passport applications pending at various passport offices all over the country;

(b) if so, what is the present backlog in Andhra Pradesh ; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to expedite the issue of passports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 16,796

(c) Several steps have been decided to expedite issuance of passports. These are enumerated in the statement laid on the table of the House.

Statement

The following steps have been decided to expedite issue of passports.

Issue fresh passports on the basis of attestations of personal particulars by Senior Gazetted Officers of Central or State Government as also to issue passports where police or CID reports are not received within four weeks. Present backlog where police reports are not received over a month is 1.38 lakhs. This pendency would be liquidated.

There is a backlog of nearly 25,000 due to shortage of passport booklets. Urgent measures are being taken to enhance the printing capacity for the passport booklets at the India Security Press, Nasik.

There is also a backlog due to passport offices having received incomplete applications. Instructions have now been issued that incomplete applications should be returned to applicants on the spot pointing out the deficiencies.

Urgent steps are also being taken to finalize the revised recruitment rules, to bring out promotion panels and to fill up vacant posts. Financial sanction of concerned authorities is being obtained on an urgent basis for the additional posts required to cope up with the increase in workload of the passport offices. Meanwhile, casual workers have been recruited temporarily special incentive is being given to staff to work overtime.

Public advisory Committees for all Passport Offices are being set up.

Issue of passports is being speeded up by early computerization of passport offices.

Periodic computerized monitoring of disposal of passport applications and public complaints is being carried out by the Ministry.

Demurrage charges payable by Nafed to Bombay port trust

*417. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

SHRI RAMSINH RATHWA:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bombay Port Trust has to recover

over Rs. 75 lacs from NAFED towards demurrage charges;

(b) if so, which consignment this demurrage is related to and since when this amount is due; and

(c) what steps the Bombay Port Trust have taken to recover this amount from NAFED?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demurrage relates to two consignments of white cement imported by the NAFED. The amount had started accruing since November, 1984.

(c) The consignments were sold to recover the port charges. However as the amount relised was not sufficient to recover the port charges fully, a demand notice for recovery was issued to NAFED. As the amount was not remitted, Bombay Port Trust has filed a suit in Bombay High Court on 18-1-1990 for recovery of the amount.

Irrigation facilities envisaged under Shahpur Rehabilitation Project

*418. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI :

SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 2500 refugees were rehabilitated in Shahpur, District Betul of Madhya Pradesh and were allotted agricultural land;

(b) if so, whether it was envisaged in the project report that irrigation facility would be provided for farming as the allotted land was light, sandy and infertile;

(c) whether it is also a fact that LATIYA-BICHUWA irrigation project was submitted for sanction about 20 years ago but has not been sanctioned to-date; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for the delay in the sanction of this project and by when the project is likely to be sanctioned and implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Shahpur Rehabilitation Project was started in 1965-66. There was no commitment by the Government of India for providing irrigation facilities in the Project. The Government of Madhya Pradesh submitted the Latia Bichuwa Irrigation Scheme in 1971 for providing irrigation facilities to the New Migrant families settled in the Shahpur Rehabilitation Project. It was not found possible to fund the scheme because the New -Migrant families settled in the project had already been allotted 5 acres of agricultural land per family in accordance with the scale prescribed for unirrigated lands.

(d) Does not arise.

अर्ध-सैनिक बलों की संख्या

*419. **डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय** : क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार देश में कानून और व्यवस्था की बिगड़ती स्थिति को दृष्टि में रखते हुये विभिन्न अर्ध-सैनिक बलों की संख्या में वृद्धि करने का विचार रखती है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसका ब्यौरा क्या है ?

गृह मंत्री (श्री मुफ्ती मोहम्मद सईद) : (क) और (ख) कानून और व्यवस्था की मौजूदा स्थिति सहित विभिन्न पहलुओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए अर्ध-